

Evening Telegraph

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1869.

REBEL DISFRANCHISEMENT.

An epistolary contest has been commenced between Horace Greeley and General Butler in regard to what the former terms "the policy of vengeance," while the latter claims that the question in dispute involves the termination of "the war of the Rebellion in successful reconstruction." The main point at issue is whether the existing political disabilities should be removed from all the Rebel leaders who favor the fifteenth amendment, or whether even those who support that amendment shall be kept on probation until the sincerity of their motives and the completeness of their conversion to Unionism are fully attested. The dispute is at best not one of much consequence, for the country will be able to worry through, after some fashion, whether a few thousand ex-Rebel leaders are permitted to vote and hold office or not. These men have been so thoroughly shorn of their old influence, and so completely supplanted by a host of new aspirants, that no considerable portion of them can regain prominence under the most favorable circumstances. Played-out politicians are at a discount in all American communities, and after they have once been fairly shelved for a few years, they are rarely able to win public favor. The leading Rebels staked everything on secession, and the downfall of the Confederacy destroyed forever their hopes of political preferment. Still, some of the members of the proscribed class may be useful as local or national officials, and as Congress has already acted on this theory by grants of amnesty in a large number of cases, we see no good reason why there should not be a further extension of the same principle. It is a grave question whether proscription is not doing quite as much harm as good by its tendency to keep alive bitter memories, and to engender animosities which the great body of the American people are anxious to destroy forever. It is quite possible that a proscribed Rebel may be more dangerous than an enfranchised one.

Whatever may be thought of the extreme leniency of our mode of dealing with the Rebellion after the destruction of its armies, it has certainly proved, in many respects, wonderfully successful. England has been vainly trying, for seven centuries, to pacify Ireland, and in all that long period she has done less to secure willing obedience than our Government has accomplished in less than five years. If we had tried, convicted, hung, and quartered every leading Rebel in the South, a cry for vengeance would have gone up from every Southern hamlet, which would inevitably have resulted, sooner or later, in new outbreaks. But the unprecedented leniency of the course actually pursued has achieved a moral conquest only second in importance to the victory of our armies. And whatever may have been the crimes of Ku-Klux Klans or Southern rowdies, no age or country has witnessed an equally complete re-establishment of national authority over such a vast district of country in so brief a period. Of individual outrages there have been many, but of concerted movements to galvanize the Southern Confederacy, not one, and any man who would propose such a scheme now in the most rabid Rebel district would be deemed a crazy enthusiast or a downright fool. Since leniency has aided to secure these results, and since proscription in Tennessee and Virginia has resulted in Republican dissensions, which have enabled the Rebel element to dictate the policy of those States, it is a mere question of time when every ban against men concerned in the Rebellion will be removed, and Congress should manifest a disposition to hasten rather than to retard this period. The desire for the complete restoration of peace prevails among the sensible men of all sections, without reference to their past records; and while the nation is appealing to the whole South to subdue its ancient antagonisms, it should, in turn, do all in its power to avoid petty irritations. Many Rebels, who are still proscribed, are quite as worthy subjects of forgiveness as a large portion of those who have been relieved of their political disabilities by the special grace of Congress, and we trust the period is near at hand when the remaining restrictions can be removed by a sweeping enactment, so that all citizens of the country can stand on a footing of equality before the law.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE LAWS.

Richardson tragedy has attracted the attention of the public, in a very forcible manner to the very imperfect and unsatisfactory state of affairs now existing in this country in regard to the laws on the subject of marriage and divorce that are in force in the several States, and to the necessity for measures of reform. It is scandalous, in the highest degree detrimental to public and private morality, that the marriage bonds should be dissolved with the facility that they are in Indiana; and the fact that some of the other States refuse to recognize such divorces only serves to make the complication worse. This condition of things is no less censurable than the scandalous disparity that exists between the laws on the subject of marriage in England, Ireland, and Scotland. It opens the door for innumerable frauds that not only affect the perpetrators, but that encourage, in the most direct manner, licentiousness, produce a low tone of morality, and sap the foundations of religion and virtue. Marriages and divorces affect the whole United States, and they ought to be

regulated by uniform laws that will apply to every State and Territory in the same manner. It is one of the oversights of the framers of the Constitution that the regulation of these matters was left to the States themselves, and the trouble required to procure the necessary amendment to that instrument will militate greatly against any speedy reform. The time is at hand, however, when a reform must be instituted, and it is important that the voice of public opinion should be heard on the subject in a decided manner.

BLONDE AND BLAND.

THOMPSON—she of the bare and brazen calves—has again appeared in print, and this time she assaults the two Tribunes, that of Chicago and that of New York. To us the most vital point made by this yellow-haired stripling is the repudiation of having applied an offensive epithet to her audiences in this city. It was rumored, on the authority of a degenerate newspaper man who had sunk so low as to "interview" the fair Lydia, that she had insinuated against the howling multitude drawn together in Philadelphia by her dazzling legs, the charge of "coldness" and "stiffness"—in short, that she had denounced her Philadelphia audiences as "Quakerish" in the extreme. But we are quite prepared to accept her denial as the truth. For that matter, the eternal fitness of things, against which the belle of the blondes kicks so vigorously, but which, despite her kicking, still holds sway to some extent in our midst, renders it highly improbable that a "Quakerish" sort of an audience would under any circumstances congregate about the legs of Lydia; and, moreover, we had ocular proof that such terms as "coldness" and "stiffness" were quite inapplicable to the audiences in question, which were altogether as loud in their manner as Lydia herself, and loudness, whichever way we choose to interpret it, is not a marked characteristic of Quakerdom.

Next in point of importance is a sentence which brings up for review the whole Thompson business, and necessitates a reargument on the merits of the case. "I am not, indeed," says Lydia, "a Fourierite, as other men have been." What are we to infer from this startling statement? That Lydia is not a Fourierite, of course; but about those "other men" who have been ——. In one of his quaintest fancies, Poe has told us of a curious sort of creatures who, abiding in church steeples and other lofty edifices, have a disagreeable and disgusting habit of amusing themselves by "rolling on the human heart a stone." "They," says the poet,— "They are neither man nor woman, They are neither brute nor human, They are ghouls."

Now, unless we are prepared to assert that Lydia is as loose in his language as he is loud in her manner, we are forced to believe that she is either a man or a woman, or neither, or both; or if neither this, that, nor the other, that he is a ghoul. This point settled satisfactorily—and we confess that it is not entirely so settled to our mind—we must be prepared to retract many harsh things which we have said in time past concerning the general impropriety of Lydia's performances. Concerning the King of the Ghouls on whose eccentricities Poe discourses so mellancholously, we are told that

"His merry bosom swells, And he dances, and he yells; and all that sort of thing, for the doing of which the unsexed Lydia has been severely censured, by the press. If Lydia be indeed a man as well as a woman, and neither the one nor the other, and a ghoul to boot, we see no good reason why he or she should not henceforth be suffered, without molestation or disparagement, to dance and to yell, and to cut a swell generally. But we sincerely trust that she will adhere to the intention expressed at the close of his epistle, wherein she says, "I, for my part, prefer to stick to my abbreviated petticoats." We hope she does. If he should discard them, not even her affinity to the race of ghouls would protect him from the slight tinge of Quakerism which still pervades public sentiment.

But the mainspring of the whole effusion of the dubious Lydia is found in the concluding statement that the blondes expect to play "a successful engagement" next spring, "right in the face of this dreadful battery of pop-guns." In simple truth, Lydia is played out in the West, where she is now sojourning, and having previously played out in the East, she is in a perplexing dilemma. The best members of her troupe have deserted her spangled banner, and her "partner" is about all of the original importation that is left. A renewal of her fight with the newspapers presents the only chance of regaining her lost notoriety; and fully appreciating this fact, some seedy and needy newspaper man has been hired to fire the first shot, which, weak as it is, is altogether too heavy to be attributed to Lydia herself. We think, however, that the good sense of our playgoers has by this time got the better of their curiosity, and that, when the blondes return to our midst, they will be suffered to dance and yell and swell in vain.

TO THE TEMPERANCE MEN who are making such earnest endeavors to ruin the cause to which they profess devotion by intermixing it with politics, we commend the warning which comes all the way from Maine. The Bangor Whip states that less real temperance work has been accomplished by the radical advocates of the cause in that State during the past year than for a long time previous. The reason is found in the fact that many of them have entered into the strife of politics with enforced abstinence as the primary plank in their platform. The same result has followed this course on the part of the temperance people all over the country, and wherever temperance has been made a political issue, the good work has been seriously impeded.

ELIZABETH GADY STANTON "detests petty weariness." At least, she so informed the womanly righters who were recently in convalescence at Cleveland; and being, moreover, fearful that her presence might give rise to them,

wrote a melancholy apology for her absence. It may be that Elizabeth slightly overrated the inflammatory tendency of her presence, but the offense was a pardonable one, and if all the other old women who are in this business would cultivate a similar vanity, the woman question would soon be solved by dropping out of sight.

THE INTERNAL REVENUE TAX.

THE internal revenue tax is the most onerous to the people, the most difficult of collection, and the most unsatisfactory in its application of any of the means devised for raising the money necessary to carry on the Government. It falls unequally upon different classes, and it opens the door for innumerable frauds of every description; and there appears to be no way in which it can be made to operate with impartiality, or yield all that it ought to if honestly collected. Not the least of the evils connected with the imposition of this tax is the horde of office-holders that it fastens upon the public, a very large number of whom are unable to resist the temptations offered them to fill their own pockets at the expense of the Treasury. To do away with all the assessors, collectors, and other agents of the Internal Revenue Office would be a positive benefit to the nation. It would not only reduce the public expenses, but it would force the men who are now living upon the nation to go to work and contribute their share towards advancing the prosperity of the country by laboring in a legitimate manner for their bread and butter. It would also discourage the great and increasing army of professional politicians, whose rapacity is now incited by the enormous number of fat offices in the gift of the Government, and who would be forced to turn their energies into other channels if those offices were largely diminished. Next to the total abolition of the internal revenue tax, the things to be desired are its more equal application and the reduction of the force of agents now required for its collection. The Government cannot afford now, and it will not probably for many years to come be able, to give up the revenue obtained in this manner; and the proposition now under consideration by the Committee of Ways and Means, to alter the method of collecting the tax, only gets over the difficulties of the present system by inaugurating one open to even greater objections.

The proposition referred to was introduced by Mr. Getz, of Pennsylvania, upon whose motion the Committee on Ways and Means was instructed to inquire into the expediency of abolishing the offices of collectors, assessors, and other agents, and of appropriating the amount of tax required to be raised from domestic sources among the several States according to their population. This would be a much fairer way of apportioning the tax than the one at present in operation, but practically we fear that it would not be found to work. It is as much as any of the States, and more than a good many of them, can do to collect their own taxes; and if obliged to collect those of the General Government also, it would be found to be practically impossible. The proposition has its advantages if it could be carried out; but the State governments will object very seriously to such an additional burden being placed upon them, notwithstanding the fact that the people are directly interested in having the tax more equally distributed and more economically collected than it is at present. It is a serious question as to whether this would not be found the most expensive and difficult method of collection, and whether, taking it all in all, it would not be found a decidedly worse method than the one it proposes to improve.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SOUTHERN LANDS.

THE greatest drawback on the prosperity of the Southern States, and one of the main causes of all their troubles, is the fact that the land is mostly in the hands of a few owners, and the impossibility that has hitherto existed for small farmers to obtain possession of their own homesteads. This state of affairs raised up a wealthy and aristocratic class, who sought to rule the country, and who precipitated the Rebellion when they found that they were unable to do so. Since the war, practical men have seen clearly that the surest way to raise the Southern States out of their present impoverished condition was to encourage settlers who would cultivate moderate sized tracts, and constitute a class of independent land owners, who would have incentives to labor that the large planters of the olden times lacked. It is particularly important, too, that the freedmen should be furnished with homesteads, and encouraged to work upon their own ground, with the assurance that they would be able to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

To further this object the National Colored Labor Convention has presented a memorial to Congress, through Judge Kelley, praying that the surveyed public lands in the Southern States may be subdivided into tracts of forty acres each, and that any freedman who shall enter upon one of such subdivisions, and cultivate the same for one year, shall receive a patent for it, the title to vest in the settler and his heirs, and to be inalienable for the period of ten years from the date of entry. They also propose that the forfeited grants of land to railroad companies be embraced in the operations of the same scheme. These suggestions are in the main judicious, and it would certainly be advisable for Congress to make such a disposition of the lands. The expediency or propriety, however, of making any discrimination in favor of the freedmen is extremely doubtful. The poor whites need just such encouragement as this quite as much as the negroes, and any homestead act that Congress may enact for the special benefit of the Southern States should apply equally to all, taking care of course to protect the freedmen from injustice, and giving them a fair chance with their white neighbors. It is also important that measures should be adopted to keep their lands out of the hands of more speculators, and to offer as many inducements

as possible to actual settlers. A judicious homestead law would do much to repair the ravages of war in the Southern States, and we hope that this matter will receive the serious and candid consideration of Congress.

"BY THEM PROUD," ETC.—Two gentlemen from Germany recently appeared before a New York police justice, each one claiming the custody, care, and comfort of a certain lady who bore them company. One of the contending Teutons was the husband of the lady in dispute; the other was her "admirer" only. The husband was unable to controvert the charge of poverty which his antagonist proffered against him; while the "admirer" in turn succeeded in establishing the fact that he was in a "position to support her more respectably." The Daniel whose judgment in the matter was sought thereupon questioned the lady, and, having been informed that "her affections" inclined to the "admirer" rather than to the husband, "he decided accordingly." This is just what we might expect after the promulgation by Beecher and Frothingham of the new code of marital rights and obligations. The explosion of the old doctrine that men and women are, or at least should be, wedded "for better or worse," could not have happened more opportunely.

THE CLAIMS of the Tehuantepec Ship Canal and Mexican Pacific Railroad Companies against the Republic of Mexico are quite startling, amounting as they do to \$322,907,511.33. In fact, we scarcely know which is the most startling, the grand total, which makes a mere bagatelle of a million, or the remarkable precision of the arithmetical process by which that grand total has been arrived at, and the strong emphasis which is laid upon the one-third of a cent which rounds it off at the little end. These claims are to be presented to the Mexican Claims Commission, now in session at Washington, and of course, if they are allowed by the commission, they will be promptly paid by Mexico. And immediately after, we may expect the United States to establish a commission for the purpose of ascertaining the precise amount of damage inflicted upon loyal people in the Southern States by the Federal army during the war, which, together with the claims of the Rebel bondholders in England, will, equally as a matter of course, be promptly settled.

COVODE VS. FOSTER.—The contest pending between the Hon. John Covode and the Hon. Henry D. Foster over the seat in the House of Representatives for the Twenty-first District of this State, will soon come up for settlement, and there can be but little doubt of the result. In this district the Democracy last year resorted to their time-honored devices in such a wholesale, reckless, and open manner, that the ostensible election of Foster was too glaring a fraud to stand the test of ordinary scrutiny. Mr. Covode has proved beyond a doubt that he received a majority of 449 votes, after the polls of certain districts in which the fraud was of so glaring a character as to vitiate them entirely are rejected, and a majority of 55 votes at least, even without such rejections. We hope the Committee on Elections will see to it that the will of the people is not trifled with in the shameless manner which the awarding of the seat to Mr. Foster will necessitate.

THAT WORLD'S FAIR.—The proposition that Congress should appropriate a million dollars or so out of the national treasury to enable the cheap and nasty boarding-houses of Washington to fleece the whole world, was so glaringly outrageous that the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia has stricken from the bill incorporating the Great International Fizzle Company the sections which proposed to make an appropriation out of the people's pockets and the franking privilege. The committee has permitted the section which authorizes a taxation of city property to remain, and to that action Washington alone need object. If the capital insists upon exhibiting its weak points, its boarding-house extortioners, and its magnificent distances, to the world at large, it should certainly have the privilege of paying for the luxury in any way that appears feasible.

WHO KNOWS?—The New York Herald employs a man who closes every article he writes with the pertinent query *Quien sabe?* Somebody ought certainly to enlighten this genius on the leading political and social questions of the day. Will any one do it? *Quien sabe?*

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